

Asheville City Council
Planning & Economic Development Committee

3:30 p.m., July 23, 2013
City Hall, First Floor Conference Room

Present: Vice Mayor Esther Manheimer, Councilman Marc Hunt

Staff: Cathy Ball, Gary Jackson, Shannon Tuch, Judy Daniel, Christy Edwards, Sam Powers, Ken Putnam, Maggie Ullman, Stephanie Monson, Dawa Hitch, Eric Hardy

The Planning & Economic Development Committee met on July 23, 2013 in the First Floor Conference Room, City Hall. Vice Mayor called the meeting to order at 3:38 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

The minutes from the May 21, 2013 meeting were approved.

Updates

Charlotte Street Comprehensive Traffic-Engineering Study – Ken Putnam

Mr. Putnam reported that an RFQ went out last summer and a consultant was selected and a contract executed last October. The report includes peak hour counts in the morning, noon and afternoon commuting times. The study is complete and will be presented at Council on August 27. Computer modeling of traffic conditions will be shown at the Council presentation.

After the council presentation, staff hopes to have support and direction to send out an RFQ for a multi-modal transportation plan (funding is already approved). This plan would include the development of a matrix to line-up all the different projects across the city in priority order. The complete streets concept means you provide accommodations for other modes of transportation, not just vehicular traffic.

Ms. Ball stated that the study made us realize that simply restriping the road (Charlotte Street) does not accomplish what we want it to accomplish. It doesn't provide wider sidewalks but it might improve traffic mobility. It does not necessarily provide the greatest improvements to local businesses. Staff needs an analytical way to come back to council to make recommendations which could be provided by the multi-modal transportation plan.

Mr. Putnam stated that the Charlotte Street Comprehensive Traffic-Engineering Study does not get into actual designs or cost estimates.

Councilman Hunt asked about the timeline for a multi-modal transportation plan. Ms. Ball stated that the first transportation commission meeting will be next week, with the RFP going out in the fall. Hopefully, a plan document will be in hand in the next year.

Eagle Market Development Update – Cathy Ball

Mr. Staudinger and Ms. Daniel have been working with Mountain Housing Opportunities for past several years. Mountain Housing has proposed a project with commercial use on the street level with residential units on the upper 6 floors. There has been a significant increase in project cost projections due to site findings which will affect foundation construction.

Due to recent findings, the top floor has been removed. The number of residential units has decreased from 70 to 60. The commercial area remains relatively the same. A report will be given at council on August 13 if final cost estimates have been received.

Scope of Work for Development Incentives Evaluation and Research Opportunities to Improve Them – Maggie Ullman

Ms. Ullman stated that the PED Committee has previously asked staff to review current development incentives and their effectiveness. A core group of employees will research the provide a bottom line analysis on how incentives have performed and the amount of investment going out and the market value of that investment. In the fall, the group hopes to engage the community and determine exactly what needs are out there and how the community recommends improving the incentives. From this input, the group will develop a communication platform. In the winter, the group will come back to PED and/or Council and present their research, the results of the community input and the proposal to streamline the current initiatives.

TIGER II Project Update – Jeff Staudinger & Planning Efforts in the Riverfront Area – Stephanie Monson

Mr. Staudinger stated that the current events in the residential areas leading down to the river are integral to the big picture of riverfront redevelopment. In context, the median household income was less than \$16,000 for 1400 households in 2010. Over 70% of the population is African American and it is a community connected by its geography and history. This area has significant development potential and there is a real synergy between public and private goals.

Current City initiatives in this area include:

- Transportation Network Plan (TIGER II)
- Clingman Forest Greenway (TIGER II)
- Town Branch Greenway (TIGER II)
- Riverside Drive Development Plan (TIGER II)

- RADTIP Stage II (ED CIP)
- Craven Street/Roberts Street (CIP, EDA)
- Five Points Roundabout
- Dr. Wesley Grant Sr. Southside Center (CIP)
- Multi-Modal Demonstration (ED CIP)
- Depot Street Parking Plan (CIP)

Current private initiatives in the area include:

- New Belgium Brewery (Private)
- Allied Health Facility (AB Tech/County)
- RAD Lofts (Private)
- 97 Roberts Street (Private)
- Reid Center (Housing Authority)
- RiverLink RiverMusic

Ms. Monson spoke briefly about the Riverside Drive Development Plan. The proposed plan will connect downtown to the river through the transformation of city owned property (10 acres). There is not a lot of development potential due to much of the area being the flood plain.

Ms. Monson stated that the next steps would include continued communication with council and boards, ongoing stakeholder engagement, continued leverage of resources, establishing measures of success, redefining our tools and prioritizing social equity.

With time running short in the meeting, Ms. Monson stated that staff would like to come back and talk about time and money and discuss the timeline for implementation. Ms. Manheimer would like them to come back and further discuss the technical aspects of the redevelopment of the riverfront area.

New Business

Short Term Rentals, Enforcement – Judy Daniel & Shannon Tuch

Due to time constraints, this topic has been postponed until the August meeting.

Announcements

Ms. Daniel reported that the consultant for the form-based code project on Haywood Road will be in town for the first time August 12-14.

Ms. Daniel reported that at their recent meeting, the Planning & Zoning Commission amended their Rules of Procedure to reflect that fact that the chair must be a resident or business owner of the city.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 20.

